HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF

MARGARET SLATTERY

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HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF



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Horace Mann took upon himself the task of obtaining for every child free education

HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF

BY

MARGARET SLATTERY



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THE PILGRIM PRESS
BOSTON

ILLUSTRATIONS

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Acknowledgment is due to Miss Hellen Keller and the Whitman Studio, Malden, Mass., for the photograph of Miss Keller and for her autograph; to the Macmillan Company for permission to use the illustration of the Stanton Street tenement from The Battle with the Slum; and to S. W. Partridge & Company for the illustration from the Life of Dr. Barnardo. The photograph of Dr. Horace Mann is taken from a statue which stands upon the terrace in front of the State House at Boston.

HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF

"He speaks not well who doth his time deplore,
Naming it new and little and obscure,
Ignoble and unfit for lofty deeds.
All times were modern in the time of them,
And this no more than others. Do thy *part*
Here in the living day, as did the great
Who made old days immortal! . . .
. . . . . .
So shall men say—
'Then was the time when men were truly men
Tho' wars grew less, their spirits met the test
Of new conditions, conquering civic wrong;
Saving the state anew by virtuous lives;
Guarding the country's honor as their own
And their own as their country's and their sons.'
. . . . . .
When error through the land raged like a pest
They calmed the madness caught from mind to mind
By wisdom drawn from old and counsel sane;
And as the martyrs of the ancient world
Gave Death for man, so nobly gave they Life,
Those the great days and that the heroic age."

HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF

ALTHOUGH it was not yet four o'clock in the afternoon, lights were shining out through all the office windows and from the dome down to the last long terrace the Statehouse was aglow with warmth and cheer.

It was snowing. On the Common and down over the Old Burying Ground real snow flakes fell, fleecy, soft and white, but on the streets they were lost in the blackness. The wind blew from the northeast and the postman said the prophesied blizzard had come. A journey of an hour and more lay between me and home and so I swept my papers into the basket and closed my desk. As I turned to make sure that I had left nothing, a line of print in heavy type on a torn magazine page that lay across the basket caught my eye. "He Took It Upon Himself," it said. My first thought was that it was a quotation from the New Testament but it looked out of place amidst the

red lettering of the page; so I stopped to read it. It was an advertisement. In fine print was an interesting paragraph about a man who had seen the need of a new type of tire, had taken upon himself the problem of finding one and after much experimenting and labor had succeeded in making one which met every requirement.

Then the heavy type emphasized it.

"HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF
. . . . . TIRE
HAS SOLVED THE PROBLEM FOR YOU,"

said the letters, black and red.

As I hurried across the Statehouse grounds I glanced over at Horace Mann looking steadfastly down across the Common, all his longings and his dreams preserved even in the bronze face; the fast-falling flakes, blown about now by the chilling wind, covered the book he held in his hand and made long white lines in the folds of his coat. "He Took It Upon Himself" — the words hurled themselves at me out of the storm and suddenly I saw him, not in the Statehouse grounds, but in a little, old, red schoolhouse, lighting the lan-

terns and candles and sweeping the floor. The hope that the men who had promised to come that night to hear him speak would not fail him stamped his thin face with eagerness. He could hardly wait to tell them his great plan — better teachers and education free to every child. I remembered the passing years, the increasing burden that *he took upon himself* and carried alone until his burning words summoned others to share it and the fulfillment of his hopes drew near.

When I reached Staniford street the children crowded the sidewalk. The snow had tempted them to linger on the way home from school and the law more deeply ingrained and more powerful than any city law, even when enforced by a man in blue, bade the boys make snowballs and they obeyed with glee. The little children held out their dark coats, caught the flakes and called to each other: "See! See! Look at mine — a *star!* I've caught a star!"

Before I reached the station I had looked into faces bearing the stamp of almost every nation of Europe. Some were bright and eager, some

pale, thin and blue with cold; many were hard with the uncanny keenness developed by the city streets in which the children lived and played and often slept. Their need was great. Suddenly above the noise of the heavy trucks and the roar of the elevated trains I heard the words "He Took It Upon Himself" and saw the strong and kindly face of the man with a passion for places where children might play under the sky and close to trees; with a passion for city homes where children might live in the light and have water enough to keep clean. I saw the transformation of Mulberry Bend and heard the voice of Jacob Riis saying, "*I cannot sleep for the burden of the city's children with their hunger for play and their playground only the street beset with danger to body and soul.*" It was a heavy burden but "He Took It Upon Himself" and because he carried it well and won his way others in a hundred cities came to share it, to stand ready to take it when he should lay it down.

All the way home — as the train rounded curves, slowed down at lighted stations softly outlined in

white, or rushed on through far-stretching fields over which the wind whistled wildly — the turning wheels said the words, "He Took It Upon Himself — Upon Himself — Himself," until the coach seemed no longer peopled with commonplace men and women going home from the work of the day, talking, laughing, sleeping or reading in desultory fashion the evening papers, but with the strong and the great, the men and the women who, like the man in the paragraph I had read, had seen a need, faced a problem and assumed the burden of its solution. What a company they were!

In a beautiful southern garden amidst lovely roses I saw a young woman and a little child. The sky was clear and blue but the child did not know; the birds sang but she did not hear. In a wild rage she threw herself upon the soft grass and kicked and screamed. She had tried to make herself understood and had failed — she could not speak. The young woman's face was full of compassion as she stooped to lift the child; tears filled her eyes as she thought of the years before that little

soul imprisoned and held fast by bars stronger than steel. Deaf, dumb and blind, what was a world to her and what was life?

Suddenly the teacher's face grew strong and tender. She would break the bars, and in that great moment she *took upon herself* all the handicaps of the little child. The years were long and the task presented new difficulties at every turn but her courage did not flag, her ambition to break asunder the last bar did not fail and one June day, Helen Keller, seeing more wonderful things than those who have eyes to see, hearing the deeper things denied to those who can hear, speaking with greater power than those of the silver tongue, stood upon a college platform to receive her diploma with the free and fortunate daughters of men. It was a wonderful day — a day of victory for the world's handicapped souls and for those who take the burdens of all such upon themselves. But that is not all, for Helen Keller, young and strong of soul, having grasped every means which could bring to her more abundant life and light, stepped out into the world, down into its black



Helen Keller, deaf, dumb, and blind took upon herself the blind babies' burden

shadow and *took upon herself* the blind babies' burden — to share it, to carry it, to make it light. Ah, Helen Keller, deaf, dumb and blind, extending your arms in the darkness to receive, to take upon yourself another's affliction, what of us who, having eyes, see not, and, having ears, fail to hear?

Then I remembered how at midnight in the fog and mist, amid the chill and grime of London's wharves along the river front, a young man, sturdy and strong, bent down to listen to the astounding words spoken in a strange vernacular by a boy of eight or ten. He had been teaching in one of the clubs that night and had asked this boy where he lived. The boy had offered to show him and had taken him to a box turned toward the wall in a wretched street. On the way he had pointed out barrels and boxes, holes in the wall and burrows under a building, in all of which boys were sleeping. In one group the astonished young man had found eleven boys, the youngest about nine and the oldest sixteen, huddled together with only the miserable rags in which they were dressed to cover them.

"Shall I wake 'em up? Want to talk to 'em?" the boy had asked. "Or shall I take yous to another lay? There's lots and lots more."

No sleep was possible for the young man that night. When morning came he had determined his life work. He had had a glimpse of the awful poverty and degradation in which hundreds of the city's boys must live. In a great passion to help *he took upon himself* their hunger and cold, their suffering and sin, their miserable existence with all its problems and the first of Dr. Barnardo's Homes was born. In England, Scotland and Canada the Homes were built. From the streets and the gutters he took the boys and none was too wicked nor too hopeless to be given a chance. With remarkable skill, for over forty years he fed and clothed them, trained and taught them, sending them out into good homes and to places of usefulness and trust all over the world. When he died, a few years ago, men of affairs and women who loved them, men leading their own sons by the hand, men strong in body and soul, men successful as the world counts success, men owning

their own homes and their farms, men working at a score of honorable trades, stood with bowed heads and eyes filled with tears as they remembered their poverty, neglect and suffering in contrast with the lives they now lived because, seeing their need, "He Took It Upon Himself."

For weeks after that snowy night when the words had looked up at me from the basket, arousing my curiosity, my thoughts in leisure moments have turned involuntarily to the men and the women who have gone out into life to lift and to share, and they have challenged my soul.

One cannot stand unappreciative in the presence of the record of Frances Willard, who, in the years when a woman's entrance into the world's life was looked upon with disapproval, when any word spoken by her in opposition to the things with which she was supposed to have nothing to do brought severest condemnation, *took upon herself* a burden of heaviest weight. Young men who had started with high hopes, ambitions and confidence in self and had lost all through drink; old men who had sold their birthright for liquor and

now staggered helplessly to their graves; women whose eyes were red with bitter, burning tears of disappointed love and pride; and women who, having lost their womanhood, had grown content with poverty and dirt; little children bearing in their poor starved bodies the awful curse of the seed their fathers had sown; all the helpless forms lying prostrate in gutters and behind bars; women with bruised faces and starved souls who stood in the courts with children in their arms to ask vengeance upon the men who had promised to love and protect them *even until death* — all these *she took upon herself*. With marvelous courage and sacrifice, amidst threatenings and dangers, she blazed the trail by which those who love their fellow men shall yet pass to complete victory over the greatest evil, the most terrible thief, the most successful murderer, the direst enemy of the human race with which civilization in its onward march has ever had to cope — the legalized liquor traffic.

One cannot look without a thrill of soul upon the record of that young physician, surgeon, teacher, philosopher, friend, preacher and pioneer

who built his home amidst snow and desolation and sailed his boat among icebergs in dense and deadly fog that he might save the souls, restore the bodies and quicken the minds of a poverty-stricken and neglected people. One cannot read the record nor see the pictures of the changes that seem the work of a magic wand, without a prayer of gratitude that such men as Grenfell were born and have found their way with the story and transforming power of Jesus Christ past challenging barriers to every dark and needy quarter of the globe.

Many sympathetic faces looked through the smoke and the gloom, the dirt and degradation of Halsted street into the hearts of the human beings who had found their way in hope from many lands, only to lose it by the pressure of the heavy hand of crushing injustice. Many came longing to help, looked and went away; some stayed for a while and in the hopelessness of it said to each other: "It is of no use — nothing can be done." She came, saw the empty awfulness of life and stayed to be a *neighbor*. Ah, it costs to sit down in the midst; to be a neighbor

one must pay a price! Jane Addams has paid it, asking for no reward. But she has a reward — her neighbors come to her, consult her, trust her, listen to her and follow her advice. She has a reward — the barterers in human souls hate her, the exploiters of labor fear her, the shameless breakers of law flee from her. She has a reward in the uplift of standards and the hope, courage and new life that have come to hundreds of her fellow men. It was a great day for her city and for all cities consciously struggling with overwhelming social problems when Jane Addams saw the need for justice and neighborliness and *took it upon herself.*

Judge Lindsey, Ernest Coulter and John Gunckel, Katherine Davis and Mary McDowell, hundreds of graduates of our colleges, scores of preachers and teachers looking out upon a world of need, were not satisfied to question, to comment, to find relief in the impotent words "somebody ought." Each in his own way has shouldered responsibility, has labored, lifted and paid the price of the bitter criticism the bearer of the burden must always pay as he takes it upon himself.



Jacob Riis "could not sleep for the burden of the city's children"

In quiet laboratories in the daytime and the night time with unlimited patience, with a persistence at which ordinary men marvel, they stand who have *taken upon themselves* the pain and suffering, the agony and torture of the bodies of men. Driven by compassion, they take their lives in their hands and one man gives himself in an effort to discover the cause for cancer, another dies in the struggle to isolate the scarlet fever germ, a third pays for the discovery of the source of yellow fever with his life. Still undaunted, they continue their work in the presence of tuberculosis, typhus, leprosy. There is nothing too deadly nor too awful to deter their souls from the search for means to save. Such are men, the men of our day, a day some term materialistic, commercialized and mercantile to the last degree.

It is true that most of us have been more concerned with the building of large ships than large men, more interested in the raising of tall buildings to the sky than in constructing towers of moral and spiritual strength in the souls of men. Some have seen our mistake; they have *taken it upon*

themselves and community conscience has been born. Community conscience is no mysterious, intangible thing. I am the community conscience; I am "the public"; I am "the Church"; else there is no common conscience, no public, no Church. The community conscience is the sum of the conscience of one man and another man and another; the public is one individual plus another individual plus another; the Church is one Christian plus another Christian and another. When I say "The community ought," "The public ought," or "The Church ought," it means "*I* ought" or it means nothing. This sense of personal, individual responsibility, which our fathers had, and which we in large measure have lost, made them great and led them to attempt the seemingly impossible. The causes which have robbed us of it are perfectly familiar to us all. We have grown so rapidly that we have not had time to think. We have hurried so fast that it has taken all our strength to breathe. The shimmer of gold has dazzled us and material success has blinded us. We have stopped thinking save in circles

— ourselves the centers and our interests the diameters.

Then, suddenly, in these recent days our children and young people who are paying the penalty of our sins have called us back to ourselves. The cities' babies, dying by thousands every year; the cities' little children suffering in the cold, fainting in the scorching heat, hungry and neglected; the cities' youth, bearing the burden of early labor, long hours, deadly conditions, countless temptations, losing manhood and womanhood in the struggle — all these held out appealing hands to those who passed by until at last individuals saw, listened and attempted to answer. The answer would be easy if we had *enough* individuals who feel the responsibility. Men cannot speak together with power until they have spoken separately. Responsibility sits lightly upon the average individual of today. Many a firm with the promise of a fair future has failed because employees had no sense of personal responsibility and many a one has succeeded because from the newest cash girl to the head of the most important department the individual felt that

success depended upon him. Many a church has failed utterly and absolutely because its individual members have left its work in the community to be done by the *abstract church* and as individuals have done nothing.

A mass meeting called to consider any cause of common need is a most interesting study. Again and again I have heard program committees say as they worked "We must ask Mr. A. and Mrs. D. to take *some* part; they will be present if they have something to do." But each of the one thousand or more cannot have some part assigned him and as yet the individual has not grasped the mighty power of the mere presence of *one*, for a thousand cannot attend unless one attends — and I am one. We are just beginning to discover anew the value of one and if in the earnest spirit of self-forgetfulness we are able to push our discovery to the point of action in a practical everyday world we shall accomplish much.

The biographies of men and women of the past are filled with records of the developing power of the sense of individual responsibility. When Queen Victoria was but a girl of twelve

her governess talked over very earnestly with her the plans for her future. She made the little girl feel the weight of the kingdom of Great Britain, over which one day she must rule. At first Victoria could not realize all that it meant, but when the governess drew for her a vivid word picture of the responsibilities that must come to her on her eighteenth birthday, the child burst into tears. Throwing her arms around her governess she cried, "I *will* be good. I understand now why you have wished me to study and learn. So much will depend on me. Oh, I will be good." The sense of responsibility, awakened then, never left her, and goes far to explain the reign whose record has never been excelled nor equaled.

Abraham Lincoln never lost the sense of individual responsibility from the day he walked back over the weary miles to release the pig made a prisoner in the soft clay until he gave up his life in the midst of his great service to his country. He was ever keen to see need and to *take it upon himself*.

When, in reply to a friend's ques-

tion, "Mr. Webster, will you tell us what was the most important thought that ever occupied your mind?" the great statesman answered, "The most important thought that ever occupied my mind was that of my *individual responsibility* to God," he explained not only his own powerful personality but his ability for clear, noble thinking and manly, fearless expression of his thoughts.

There is practically no limitation to what men have been able to do when once possessed by the sense of personal responsibility and the passion to take the burden of need upon themselves.

In the common world of one's own everyday he may see the individuals who meet the challenge of another's need, accept it and grow strong under its weight.

Not long since, while waiting for a train in a station through which on holidays great streams of people pass, I saw a young girl with face flushed, holding her hat in one hand and a suit-case, half open, in the other, stagger into the ladies' waiting-room. No matron was present. The girl spoke to one and another of the wo-

men, who met her drunken friendliness with stern rebuffs or turned from her and escaped. She finally found a seat and the women near rose hastily and went to the other side of the room. For a moment she was quiet; then she burst into a sentimental song. The sight of the face so young that it showed traces of real beauty as the girl turned from side to side making reeling gestures to illustrate her song made one heartsick. One woman said she would go for an officer but before she left the room a Salvation Army girl with a box for contributions entered. She took in the situation at a glance, greeted the girl in friendly fashion, sat down with her for a few moments and talked. Then she helped her wash her face with cold water, put on her hat, closed her suit-case and together they went to the ticket office.

"Where does she live?" asked one woman who had followed.

The Army girl answered — it was a small town about twenty miles away.

"Who will take care of her when she gets there?" asked another.

"I am going with her," quietly

answered the girl, whose face was sweet, tender and beautiful under her Army bonnet.

One could tell by her manner as she walked toward the train that this was not the first unfortunate girl she had led home. When I entered my own train ten minutes later it was with a sense of inferiority and shame. *I* had *looked upon* misfortune and sin; the Salvation Army girl had *taken it upon herself*.

After school or on Saturday afternoons years ago a little girl of ten used to pass my house, hurrying up the hill. She was one of the pupils in the grammar school and I often spoke to her.

"Where are you going in such a great hurry?" I would ask.

Always a smile lighted her thin little face as she answered, with a ring of great happiness in her voice, "Up to my Sunday school teacher's house."

One Friday night before I could ask the question she called out to me in great glee, "I'm going up to my Sunday school teacher's house," and then, very softly, "*to stay to supper*."

Some days afterward she told me

about it. No detail of the arrangement of the table, the dishes, the silver, the food, had escaped her keen eye. It had been the experience of a lifetime, for the ten-year-old lived in a basement home of two rooms. Her father spent a great deal of his time in the county jail for cruel, abusive treatment of his family while he was intoxicated. When he was "doing time" the mother washed and scrubbed and the little girl took care of the four younger children and did a large share of the housework. What that "Sunday school teacher's house" meant to that poor, starved, little soul no one can measure.

As the years passed the Sunday school teacher became more and more a refuge and an inspiration. Under her guidance and with her help the child of the tenements graduated from the high school, took a normal school course, earning her own way, and began to teach. After three years of successful teaching she married, taking her young brother, the only one of the family who seemed to have any ambition, to live with her in the simple but comfortable home into which she had put all that the

years had taught her. When I saw her there, gracious in manner and speech, surrounded by all the evidences of culture and refinement, I envied that Sunday school teacher who had *taken upon herself* the burden of a poor, anæmic, hopeless-looking little daughter of a cruel, drunken father and a disheartened mother made careless by all she had suffered. The investment paid such large dividends! To have given the world a good teacher and a wise intelligent homemaker is no small contribution.

It costs to take upon oneself the burden of such a child — *of course* it costs. One of the other teachers in that Sunday school had said, "I am willing to teach on Sunday but I can't be bothered by children running to my home during the week. It is too much to be expected of any teacher." And it is truly "too much to be *expected*" but not too much to be *given*, when once the call sounds in one's soul.

I recall a teacher in the public school with which I was associated. She was a cheerful, earnest, tactful woman, then about twenty-five. She had forty-eight children in the seventh

grade in a poverty-stricken district. Each year she wrought miracles in her room. In the grade below the children were careless and dirty. Dresses and suits were torn and buttonless. In her room after the first month cleanliness became a habit and neatness followed. Each one of those forty-eight children was an *individual* to her. They were in no sense a part of a system. There was no medical inspection in that school and until Jessie reached the seventh grade no one knew that she had only about half vision, or if it had been known nothing had been done about it. Each teacher had discovered that Fritz was stubborn and indulged in spells of sullen anger, but no one found out until he reached the seventh grade that a very bad condition of his teeth gave him continual pain and caused serious indigestion. Each teacher had pitied little Timothy Marvin, who suffered from a deformity in the right leg, but not until he reached the seventh grade was the cause of the trouble discovered, after which a course of treatment undertaken by a kindly surgeon sent the boy, at the end of three years,

to high school without crutches and with the deformity scarcely noticeable.

Other teachers had seen these children, felt sorry for their handicaps, tried to be patient with their limitations; she *took upon herself* the misfortune of each child, his problem became her problem and she could not rest until she had found a way to help. As the years passed, her capacity for "feeling another's woe" and for taking it upon herself grew and her state, realizing her value, called her to a position of great responsibility and found her ready. She had learned to forget herself in the handicaps of others and in blessing scores of lives her own has grown great.

Last night I met a young hero who has *taken it upon himself*. He was coming home from work in a paper mill. A year ago he was a care-free boy, a freshman in the high school; now he is the head of the family of five. The younger sister will help as soon as the law permits, but just now he must bear all the burden and he is doing it without complaint, squaring his shoulders and holding his head

high in manly fashion. Would that he were the only one — but alas, the boy burden-bearers are a great army and the girls are even more. They need someone to share the heavy weight, to lift *with* them.

It is with a great uplift of spirit that one thinks today of his fellow men and their capacity for burden-bearing in the dark places where, though few see them and few care for them, either body or soul, they are still faithful. I never see a great ocean liner, gay with flags, its decks crowded with smiling faces and waving handkerchiefs; I never look upon the blue sky above the gay scene nor hear the music as the giant ship swings gracefully out into the river as if glad once more to try her strength, without suddenly plunging in thought down below that water line, soft with white foam, to the dark awfulness of the place where my brother men toil in the blackness and heat, keeping up the fires faithfully hour after hour through the days and nights, *hoping* and dreaming, and ready to play the hero at a moment's notice. I never see a long freight train of steel cars loaded with black,

shining coal go thundering along over the rails, east or west, without thinking of my toiling brothers, so many of whom come with high hopes to the black pit in which they dig or to the blazing furnaces from which they turn out those rails and plates of steel. I glory in the fact that these are my fellow men and in the greater fact that in spite of evil, exploitation and injustice, they will climb, rise above them, lift their children with them and their children's children shall walk in pleasant places.

I never see the flowers and wreathes, the long baskets of laundry, the paper boxes and cheap garments on which the weary hands of thousands of girls have labored, without a feeling of pride that despite poverty, disease and injustice these girls can climb and do climb and their souls triumph.

If there be any part of the burden they bear, these heroes of industry, that their fellow men who are less burdened can share, it is no wonder that at last, though making many mistakes, they are coming to *take it upon themselves* — not because they must but because they want to.

Where in the procession of those

who in the past and in the present have *taken it upon themselves* are you, as you read this page? What have you as an individual taken upon yourself?

Some shirk. How one pities those who have shrugged their shoulders and dropped the burden — the idle, the purposeless, the self-seekers, the pleasure-mad. How their souls shrink as the years pass!

Nothing can make the extremes in the civilization of our day appear right. Despite all clever arguments, despite all salves to conscience, despite the obstacles that seem to defy any solution of the problem, the fact that Mary Lavoy started work yesterday at four o'clock in the morning and worked until seven-thirty; then rushed home to get breakfast for her four children and to nurse her baby, who had cried with hunger for an hour; washed and ironed until five in the afternoon; left her husband's supper where he could get it after a two-mile walk home to save carfare; then dragged her weary body back to an office building to clean and scrub until eight o'clock that night; while Mrs. Ethelyn Grayson arose at

ten, spent the rest of the morning in caring for hair, eyes, nails and complexion, attended a fashionable luncheon, motored out to the club-house to a tea-dansant, dined with friends, attended the theater and on her return declared to her husband that she simply must go abroad for a time for she was bored to death by the routine of life in the American city in which he seemed determined to live — this plain, cold *fact*, I say, shows that something is wrong — absolutely and unqualifiedly *wrong*. And the fretful question, "Well, what do you expect me to do about it?" or the half-sarcastic "*I* can't help it; I do not see how it concerns me," can never make it right.

Peter Clay was without work for six weeks through no fault of his own. From a daily wage of one dollar and a half he could not save money and support his family of four children. During the six weeks when they tried to live on what he got by doing odd jobs they were all so poorly nourished that during the early spring he lost his little golden-haired three-year-old with pneumonia. He borrowed money for her funeral, struggled

against the strain and grief for his wife's sake and then, when he was just beginning to find hope, the scorching August heat robbed him of his baby. There was no money; there was no one of whom to borrow a second time. They got a plain pine coffin and Peter Clay took it in his arms to the grave where they had buried his little girl. He threw himself on the ground beside it and cried in the agony of his soul — a man's soul, a courageous soul that had tried honestly to win out against the poverty that compelled him to live in dark rooms in a wretched street and to eat food that did not nourish and could not sustain life.

On the way home Peter Clay saw long lines of machines standing before gorgeously-lighted restaurants and hotels; saw richly-dressed women and successful-looking men talking, laughing, eating. He listened to the music and gazed at the flowers and thought of the little pine box. A new bitter look came into his troubled eyes. He turned quickly and hurried down to a meeting in a bare hall in his neighborhood which he had always shunned before. When he

came out he had sworn allegiance to the red flag; he had forgotten in his bitter agony his country and his God; defiance filled his heart. Eggs and fresh vegetables, butter and sweet milk labeled with figures so high that he could not buy them, three clean, sunny rooms where one could live and feel himself a decent member of society, but advertised at a rental so high that they were absolutely impossible to him — the knowledge that these necessities for real living were *out of his reach* robbed him of patriotism and of his once kindly nature; and finally, as the days passed and the deadly poison did its work, he lost all his finer qualities and his heart became only one throbbing desire for revenge.

While this awful tragedy worked out its certain end in Peter Clay, a fellow man sat in his luxurious office, declaring to his friend that he must find something to do with himself and his money and outlined a plan for a country estate that staggered even the imagination of the architect.

"What will you do with it when you get it done?" queried his friend.

"Oh, I don't know," he answered.

"It will amuse Mrs. —— and the girls for awhile at least." And he went back to his planning.

The plain, cold fact that Peter Clay and this man can live in the same day and generation in the same city shows that something is wrong, dead wrong, and no words or explanations can make it right.

If Mrs. Ethelyn Grayson should give Mary Lavoy twenty dollars a month so that she need not scrub, if now and then she should send her some groceries and out of her abundance should give her some clothing to make over for the children, that would not make it right. If the builder of the mansion in the country should give Peter Clay fifty dollars to help him through the summer and a ton of coal or more to keep him warm in the winter, that would not make it right.

The wrong is far too deep for these gifts to cover. The gifts cost *nothing* and so are inefficient. Mary Lavoy's husband and Peter Clay need a fair and just return for what they have to give; then Mary will not have to work and Clay can bear his own burden.

What then? Just this — the determination of each individual to take the solution of those problems upon *himself.* All great problems have been solved by individuals and worked out by groups. An individual solved the problem of the Atlantic Cable; an individual toiled over and sacrificed for the telegraph; an individual conceived the idea of the telephone and another individual found the coil that made long distance telephoning possible; an individual gave us wireless, another the arc light, another the storage battery, and others the countless conveniences for our pleasure and profit; an individual made possible Brooklyn Bridge, another the Hudson Tube, another the Simplon Tunnel; an individual gave us ether and another radium. It will be an indivudal who will give us the key to the solution of social problems. But unless *every* individual is at the task, unless all individuals are seeking in a spirit of earnest sacrifice to find the solution, *the* individual who is to succeed must wait long for the victory.

"The times are ripe," we say. What does it mean? It means we are ready; it means men *want* the



Dr. Barnardo took upon himself the rescue of the children from the streets of London

answer. Even our Lord himself could not come to Bethlehem's manger until "the time was fully come" and the tired, weary, degraded world, conscious of its darkness, wanted light.

As yet men do not want the answer to social problems. Men *want* to make vast fortunes at any cost; women *want* to live in luxury, idle and useless as members of society, and they want their daughters to follow after them; men *want* to loaf, to steal, to live by any save honest means; women want to give as little and to get as much as they can; parents want and mean to shun the responsibility of their children's upbringing, to leave them to the streets, the motion-picture houses, the dance halls — to anything which will relieve *them* of the task of providing amusement. As yet we do not want the answer.

But the far horizon is warm with the glow of the promise of another day. The individuals who are *taking it upon themselves* are growing in number and strength. Magazines crowded with answers to the demands of all sorts and conditions of men are making room for those who have

taken it upon themselves; daily papers filled with the answers to the demand of hectic imaginations and empty, sensation-loving brains are finding increasing space for those who are *taking it upon themselves.* Men and women clean, strong and untainted are concerned that the social evil is robbing children of their birthright and sending them out into life blind, deformed, idiotic, imcompetent; men and women are concerned over the problems of the foreigner, for whom, as long as we permit him to come, we are responsible until he is one with us and of us. Men and women are as individuals concerned about the woman who runs to shelter with her little children at the approach of her husband, a brute crazed by drink; they care about the pitiable state of the opium slave and the drug victim, they are as individuals troubled over the greatest loss of all, a man's loss of his personal God; they want to give him back.

More than that, a new public sentiment is pushing its way from coast to coast. Once men asked, "How much is he worth?" Now they add, "How did he *make* it?" Once they

asked, "What was he sent to prison for?" Now they add, "What *caused* his downfall?" Public sentiment — that is, *your* sentiment plus my sentiment plus that of our neighbors — is the strongest ally for a good cause and the most powerful foe of an evil one. No teacher in a public school, even if her strength be great and she wields the rod with an iron hand, even if her punishments be terrible to bear or her promised rewards great, can establish order and keep it if the *sentiment* of the school be against her. But if school sentiment be with her discipline is an easy task and no mischief-maker or bully, no sly designer of evil schemes, can win out against her. What is true of the little world of little citizens is true of the larger world of older citizens. Public sentiment speaks with authority and public sentiment today is more and more with the oppressed and against the oppressor, for the honest and upright and against the schemes and intrigues of men.

So I find myself confronted again with the value of one. I see myself a contributor to that public sentiment which makes it possible for great

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souls to do their work; and I cannot shift responsibility, for should I fail in what *I* would like to *do*, I may still give myself to the paving of the way for its accomplishment by another. The world's need still challenges me as an individual and will not let me go.

At one of the conferences last summer I sat, on a warm afternoon, under the pines talking with a group of young men and women about the easy way in which many young people drop responsibility — the two young ladies who had promised to furnish lemonade having failed us, we had a good text. I asked what, in their judgment, explained the inability to feel personally responsible for things in our day. One of the youngest men said promptly, as if he had been thinking of it for a long time:

"It is because you can't help feeling that you are too small to amount to anything. What difference does it make what I think about the tariff, immigration problems or foreign missions?"

"Yet Livingstone was alone in Africa," said one of the girls in the mission study group.

"And Carey alone in India," added another.

"Gordon was pretty much alone in China."

"Look what Luther did in Germany."

"Columbus, poor fellow, found himself rather alone."

"Say, we know *some* history," laughed one of the boys, pleased with the answers that came so readily.

"Nevertheless," said the young man who had spoken first, "*I* am not Luther, nor yet Columbus."

"We do not need Luther nor Columbus at present," I said, "but we need *you* and who knows what young people sitting on this hillside fifty years from now may say of what *you* have done?"

The suggestion inspired the young man for a moment. "I'd like to do something worth while all right," he said; and then added slowly, "but *one* person is pretty small after all."

If only we could make them see that what "I" do and think and say has great significance; that "my" world can be no better, no more generous, no stronger, no more loyal to high principle and lofty endeavor

than "I" am; that as "I" refuse to give and lift and take, somewhere the burden will press more heavily. This is the problem of the educator, the parent, the preachers — to make every child feel his value to a world of need and to accept his responsibility to God and his brother.

I have often wondered if Jesus Christ ever felt for a moment that his task was hopeless. It must have been a great shock to him and a great sorrow to meet and uncover the sin, hypocrisy, greed and littleness of man. If ever there was reason for loss of faith in one's mission he had it. The complacent snobbery of the self-encircled Pharisees, the greed of the buyers and sellers in the very courts of the temple of God, the ambitions of the disciples, the cowardice of Pilate, the jealous envy of the Priests — these might easily have made him lose all hope that the thing he had come to do could ever be done. Any one of them might have made him ask, "What can I hope to accomplish with men and motives like these?"

But there is no hint of such a spirit in any of the words that he

spoke, the lessons he taught, the stories he told. Looking into hard, shrewd faces he said, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you." In the presence of evil and sin he said, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Walking with disciples quarreling over precedence in the hoped-for kingdom, he commanded, "Love one another," and hurled into their consciousness "the *last* shall be first, the first shall be last." Facing the rich young ruler, wrapped in his great possessions, he pleaded "Go and sell and come and follow." Looking out over a group of self-seekers he declared, "He that saveth his life shall lose it."

Alone in a world that could not understand, was too busy to listen, and too selfish to obey, he stated courageously, "The Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, smallest of *all* the seeds, yet when it is grown it covereth the earth and the birds lodge in its branches"; and again "The Kingdom of God is like unto leaven which a woman *hid* in three measures of meal and the *whole* was leavened." Triumphantly from the

crushing agony of the cross he told the world that the end for which he came was accomplished and after his great victory, surrounded by a group of provincial Jews who had failed him in the hour of his need, he commanded with confidence, "Go ye into all the world and preach this gospel."

No wonder men worship him! In the presence of words like these one dares tell his own heart and his neighbor that, confident of final victory, he may look at the problems vexing the souls and wearing the bodies of men, and to the fullest extent of the power of *one*, may in his name take them all upon himself. In his name and under the inspiration of his power, remembering what men have done and are doing, one dares call upon the Church — not the cold marble, the brick and wood, the tall towers and spires; not the creeds of words which men have put together as best they may; not the ecclesiastical governments by which affairs are managed but upon the *warm* living, flesh-and-blood *individuals* that make up the whole. One dares call upon *them* to plunge down where greed and sin run riot and to reach out where heroic

souls struggle with circumstance, taking it all, without fear, upon themselves.

I love to recall often the old story of the monk sitting by the window of his rude stone hut on the mountain side, looking down upon the little village below. The years seemed long since, a busy, happy boy, he had played in its streets and climbed the hillsides to care for the cattle, yet he was still young. It was five years now since he had forsaken the great city to return to his village home wearing the cross and the long robe fastened with a cord about his waist. He had hoped for release from the burdens of sin and sorrow, of suffering and shame, that oppressed his soul at every turn in the city streets, but he had been disappointed. Poverty and sin lived in the valley and evil lurked where his boyish eyes had never dreamed. The village had seemed accursed and so he had left it, climbed to the plateau, built his hut, planted his garden, enjoyed sunrise and sunset, listened to birds and breezes, read, prayed, grown strong and become content — until the day he fell asleep and dreamed.

HE TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF

He had been reading in the glory of the sunset the story of Calvary — the terrible cross, the dark tomb and then the glorious morning, the Risen Lord and life indeed! When he had completed the wonderful story, which, though familiar, thrilled his soul, he prayed long and, still kneeling, fell asleep. As he slept he dreamed that he walked upon the road from earth to heaven. Dark it was at first and hard to travel; then it grew lighter; then beautiful with flowers. At a turn in the road he met the Master.

"Oh Master," he cried, kneeling at his feet, "why didst thou leave us? We need thee so sadly. Couldst thou not have stayed?"

The Master answered softly, "I finished the work I had to do."

"Oh Master!" said the monk, made bold by his eagerness. "But the burden, the burden of poverty and sin. It is with us still; it deadens the soul. Who can bear the burden of man's need?"

The Master smiled. "I *share* with those who love me the burden of man's need," he said. "I have left a part of the burden for them."

"But Master," cried the monk in

sorrow and in fear, as the Master looked into his very soul, "what if they *fail* thee?"

"Ah, I am counting on them!" said the Master and his voice thrilled the monk to the depths of his being. "I am *counting* on those who love me."

When he awoke — so real had been the dream and so clear the vision — he gazed for some moments about the tiny room and then out into the moonlight, but all was still. He arose and stood at the door looking down, down over the jagged rocks to the village, asleep in its poverty and sin. Then in the silence of his retreat he sat down to think. It had been so quiet, so comfortable; there had been time for worship, prayer and thought. His needs were simple and they had all been met; he had been well content. But the dream disturbed him. It was early morning when for a moment he fell again upon his knees; then he arose, took off his robe and, folding it neatly with the cross and beads, laid it away. It was with mingled feelings of fear and hope that he dressed in the clothes he had worn when, as a young student, he had left his father's home. "Now," he said

softly, "I am one of them." Carefully he set his room in order and closed and fastened the door of his hut. A moment he paused for another look at the world below him, lying still in the morning mist; then he grasped his mountain stick firmly and started down the trail. As he walked the look of fear and dread upon his face was changed to one of joy. "I'm going back," he said half aloud, "back down into the midst of it all. He has finished his part; now he works with me. He is counting on *me*. I will not fail!"

I challenge you young men and women who read this page to go with him as he goes — down into the midst of the problems that must be met and solved, down where life is hard and men must toil, down into the thick of the battle with selfishness and greed, into the commonplace made gray by the deadly grind, into the midst of mad pleasures where souls seek to find release, into the homes where men and women struggle to be true and fail. Leave your ceaseless round of self-indulgence, your drifting days where, safe and well content, you may draw down the

shades, say your comfortable prayers at eventide and easily *forget*. Let your prayers be like Christ's as you kneel alone in the night when the day's work is done. Go out from this place and this hour into the problems of your own home, your office and school, your city streets, your country lanes; go out to lift burdens, knowing that in the ultimate plan of the eternal God you have a part. I pray you turn to the Christ of Calvary, the Man of Galilee and say to him, with joy, "I see the need. *I take it upon myself*."

"On the far reef the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
While still the sea behind them
Urges its forces home;
Its song of triumph surges
O'er all the thunderous din,
The wave may break in failure,
But the tide is sure to win.

"The reef is strong and cruel,
Upon its jagged wall
One wave, a score, a hundred
Broken and beaten fall;
Yet in defeat they conquer,
The sea comes flooding in,
Wave upon wave is routed,
But the tide is sure to win.

"O mighty sea! thy message
In clanging spray is cast,
Within God's plan of progress
It matters not at last
How wide the shores of evil,
How strong the reefs of sin,
The waves may be defeated,
But the tide is sure to win!"

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He took it upon himself

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